UNITED NATIONS **S**

Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/1999/1068
18 October 1999
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: FRENCH

LETTER DATED 18 OCTOBER 1999 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF BURUNDI TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to transmit to you the request of the Government of Burundi addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations concerning the urgent need to find a new facilitator of the negotiations on Burundi to replace the late Mwalimu Julius Nyerere (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would consider the text of this letter and its annex as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Marc NTETURUYE
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex

Note verbale dated 17 October 1999 from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Burundi addressed to the Secretary-General

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Republic of Burundi presents its compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and, following the death of His Excellency Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, Facilitator of the peace negotiations on Burundi, has the honour to inform him of the following:

(a) The Government of Burundi wishes to pay a well-deserved tribute to His Excellency Mwalimu Julius Nyerere for the enormous amount of work he accomplished in the search for peace and national reconciliation in Burundi. May the soul of this illustrious man rest in peace;

(b) The Government of Burundi reaffirms its unshakeable political determination to pursue the negotiations for peace and national reconciliation in an irreversible manner until the conclusion of a peace agreement. Comprehensive and inclusive political dialogue is the best way to achieve this essential national goal;

(c) In this connection, the Government believes that, notwithstanding the important progress already achieved, a facilitator of the peace negotiations remains necessary. Indeed, the negotiations are now at a crucial phase in which such central questions as those relating to the cessation of violence, the transitional institutions, the forces of law and order and security and the future of the rebellion still have to be negotiated and resolved under the auspices of a moderator who will act as a catalyst and bring the parties together;

(d) The late President Julius Nyerere was selected as Facilitator for his great personal qualities, such as his international stature and his ideals of peace and the emancipation of peoples. As for the host country, the United Republic of Tanzania, and the Nyerere Foundation, which have been used in the facilitation process, they were used more for the personal convenience of the Facilitator than for essential reasons of productivity;

(e) The cessation of hostilities, which was initially made a prerequisite for the negotiations, has subsequently been neglected for incomprehensible reasons, at the risk of ruining the whole process. A peace agreement signed during the continuation of the war would be as senseless as it would be inapplicable in practice;

(f) The Government of Burundi, in deep disagreement with the office of the Facilitator, has for more than a year been calling unsuccessfully for the involvement of the armed faction of the rebellion in the current peace process, even if on a parallel basis;

(g) Time is against the process, which is exposed to negative elements and still inspires little hope in the population, which is experiencing great social

and economic difficulties and is prey to blind terrorism devoid of any political or moral basis;

(h) It is essential to capitalize on the work already achieved in the Arusha process. Nevertheless, it is important to correct the weaknesses observed in the methodology and management of the negotiations, the quality and rhythm of which must be considerably improved.

As a result of this state of affairs:

(a) The Government of Burundi welcomes the meeting of special envoys to be convened by the United Nations in New York on 19 October 1999 to determine the best profile to be given to the peace negotiations from the standpoint of content (including the element of violence), methodology and rhythm in order to achieve an applicable comprehensive peace agreement as quickly as possible;

(b) A new facilitator should be appointed without delay so that the negotiations will not go astray or be lost in conjecture of various kinds which might bring to naught the gains that have already been achieved. The following criteria should guide the search for the new facilitator:

(i) International stature (excluding Heads of State in office), professionalism, moral authority;

(ii) Neutrality and independence of mind;

(iii) Acceptability by the principal parties to the negotiations;

(iv) Awareness of the urgent need for the cessation of hostilities and determination to promote all means to be used to that effect;

(c) In the past, it has been noted that there is a weakness in having a single facilitator in that one or other of the parties to the negotiations can become antagonistic. The Government of Burundi proposes that the new facilitator should have two or three assistants to form a collegium;

(d) Committees 1 and 2 still have fundamental questions to discuss intensively and in depth. They are both presided over by South Africans. Moreover, South Africa provides increasingly tangible support in the settlement of the armed conflict. In addition, that country wields a strong objective and constructive influence in Central and East Africa. The Government of Burundi proposes that the Republic of South Africa should be requested to continue the facilitation of the Burundian negotiations;

(e) It is up to the international community to propose a new facilitator. In any event, the Government of Burundi has no objection to the new facilitator utilizing all or part of the means of the former facilitation team if they have proved their effectiveness;

(f) In order not to risk confusion and to ensure that the atmosphere of consensus already created between the parties is not lost, it would not seem to us opportune to resume the negotiations outside a structure which has been made

reliable and given responsibility by the international community in accordance with the observations set out above.

The appointment of a new facilitator is therefore a matter of extreme urgency for the resumption of the negotiations.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Republic of Burundi is deeply grateful to the Secretary-General of the United Nations for his kind cooperation and takes this opportunity to convey to him the renewed assurances of its highest consideration.